

# Fundamentals of Geotourism With a Special Emphasis on Iran

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## Introduction

The forgotten more than half of the nature-based tourism deals with geotourism and geoconservation. Author thinks to be true that it is better to consider geoconservation through *geotourism window* to be rewarding in its own right, independent of economic considerations at first stage of studies such as assessments. Through geotourism, a better understanding of the earth's geological wonders can be achieved. At an earlier time, much of the focus in nature-based tourism activities was on living things (namely biotic nature attractions or biodiversity phenomena such as visiting natural areas to view wild flowers or animals, ...), ecotourism, wildlife tourism, and so on.

In general, geotourism deals with non-living parts of the natural environment (that is to say, abiotic nature or geodiversity such as geological features, landforms and land processes ...).

Nature-based tourism moves forward with attention to biotic nature and its integration with tourism industry, and is recently completed with other distinct sub-sector of nature namely abiotic nature via geotourism,

Particularly, this book (p: 17) defines *geotourism* as:

*"Geotourism is a knowledge-based tourism, an interdisciplinary integration of the tourism industry with conservation and interpretation of abiotic nature attributes, besides considering related cultural issues, within the geosites for the general public."*<sup>2</sup>

In this book, geosites generally involve geomorphological sites (or *geomorphosites*) and geological sites such as petrological, volcanological, ... sites and all selected geodiversities are considered as potential geosites that after providing tourism infrastructures and geoconservation basic frameworks and preparing geointerpretation centers will change to be real geosites, for the purpose of tourism marketing and advertising as geotourism destination. We can see geodiversity even in the built environment and

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interpretation preparation make understanding of geology possible for general people and bring *Geology on Our Door step* with proper interpretation.

This book examines the integration between abiotic nature and tourism industry with regard to its conservation values. The concept of geoconservation for general people can be conceptualized in relation to the spiritual values of abiotic nature, and it may help develop a proper relationship between man and nature, and decrease the spiritual crisis in modern man.<sup>1</sup>

The geodiversity of landscapes and geomorphological landscapes in association with the body of knowledge relating to earth history and geological processes provide for immense scope within the context of potential geosites. In this book, the aim of visiting geosites by general people and students includes: learning geoconservation and its appreciation, engaging a sense of wonder against creation of abiotic nature by the Supreme being in plain language via a sacred science at interpretation centers and passive or once in a while active recreation with additional components to visitor experience. On the other hand, natural heritages besides cultural-historical heritages form man's national identity.

Considering different dimensions and diversity of geotours, classification of Geotourism industry in this book involves:

1. Geological and Geomorphological sites
2. Mining (ancient, abandoned, current) sites
3. Road Cutting (section) sites
4. Anthropological (in caves & mines) sites<sup>2</sup>
5. Stone house (or buildings constructed from local stones, houses carved into the steep slopes ...) sites (historical geosites)
6. Adventure-based sites

Mankind's activities pose many threats to geosites. The importance of safeguarding and managing it for future generations is now widely accepted as part of sustainable development. This book presents a standpoint to like-minded people that wish to conserve their abiotic nature heritage such as

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1. Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man*, p. 157., Kazi Publications; Rev. Subedition (August 28, 2007). Language: English (also in Persian, Turkish, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish). MENTIONED IN FARSI THROUGH BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THIS BOOK.
  2. It is required to mention that road cutting sites and anthropological sites (specially those that are related to human fossils) are a sub-branch of geological sites, but have been separately mentioned here for more emphasis on their potential for geotouristic planning.

geological, geomorphological and mining heritage and promote their country's tourism destinations.

This book includes five chapters:

1. General Principles
2. Dimensions and Diversity of Geotouristic Tours
3. Interpretation in Geotourism Industry (Interpretive Geotours)
4. Geoconservation, Education and Geotourism
5. The Future of Geotourism Industry

This book is the first to describe the fundamentals of geotourism. It draws on examples from Iran, and other corners of the world to explore topics including: interpretation and geoconservation, Islam and nature conservation, and also educational, economic, cultural, social, ecological and geological values of geotourism and geoparks. This volume highlights different types and dimensions of geotours, planning, interpretation preparation and provides a sound basis for taking geotourism into the future, mentioning that abiotic nature should be conserved because of their creation values given by the Supreme being to human, regardless of man's scientific or visual reactions to spiritual values of abiotic nature and this will be achieved by instilling interest via interpretation in actual geosites for public. This book explores issues for professionals, government and students from different disciplines (physical geography (geomorphology and climatology), geology, environment students) and everyone who seeks general information on geotourism industry as an applied science. It is specially a textbook for tourism management students in Bachelor and Master of Art level in Iran.

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